



Dana E. Blackwell
Executive Director

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

COMMISSIONERS:
CAROL O. BIONDI, VICE CHAIR
PATRICIA CURRY
HON. JOYCE FAHEY
HELEN A. KLEINBERG
DAISY MA, VICE CHAIR
DR. LA-DORIS MCCLANEY
SANDRA RUDNICK
ADELINA SORKIN, LCSW/ACSW
DR. HARRIETTE F. WILLIAMS, CHAIR
STACEY F. WINKLER

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **May 16, 2005**, in room 140 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Not Established)

Carol O. Biondi
Helen Kleinberg
Daisy Ma
Dr. La-Doris McClaney
Dr. Harriette Williams

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Patricia Curry
Joyce Fahey
Sandra Rudnick
Adelina Sorkin
Stacey F. Winkler

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the May 16, 2005 meeting was not approved because a quorum was not established.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

- Chair Williams attended her 1st Five Commission meeting as the Commission's representative. The meeting included 1) a presentation of two KTLA children's programs in anticipation of a refunding decision; 2) a review of their \$1.3 billion dollar budget although they anticipate a 20-24% reduction in the budget over the next 5 years.

- The Commission is in receipt of a congratulatory letter from Supervisor Molina on its involvement with the planning for Prop. 63 funds. She specifically recognized Commissioners Curry and Rudnick.
- Paul Freedlund has been reassigned to Service Bureau 3 as a Regional Administrator for the Santa Clarita office.
- The Commission has received a follow-up response from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to Commission questions that were generated from DMH's March 7th presentation.
- Chair Williams asked Commissioners to respond to the vacation survey so that a meeting schedule could be set accordingly. The upcoming CWLA conference is in conflict with the June 20th general meeting. There is interest by Commissioners to attend. Chair Williams suggested that the meeting is moved to the 21st. A room at the Hall of Administration is not available. Chair Williams suggested that we go to one of the Department's regional offices.
- The Kinship Conference is taking place on June 9th.
- The Executive Director will be pursuing implementation of the Commission's website. She will also begin an outline of a Commission brochure that would include the Commission's activities from FY2003-04 through FY 2004-05. Input was encouraged.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- The Department is beginning to examine the role of the intensive services worker in relation to visitation and other issues related to family reunification in the context of Point of Engagement (POE). Additionally, Dr. Sanders stated that highlighting goals for reunification is necessary as well. He acknowledged Commissioners Kleinberg and Sorkin for their continued focus on family reunification issues and practice.
- The group home work group has met approximately three times. A draft document about the future use of group homes was generated. Dana Blackwell who attends the meetings will ensure that Commissioners receive a copy as Dr. Sanders has invited their input.
- The retirees hired for the P3 program are on board. Their focus is to investigate permanency resources for older youth.
- The roll out of Concurrent Planning and POE continues and is in different phases of their implementation timetable. An examination of the intensive services workers effectiveness in relation to family reunification is taking place in the offices in which POE has been implemented.
- The Department is recruiting shelter foster homes as resources for the more difficult youth in the system who are staying at the Command Post. Dr. Sanders believes that the group home contract is the primary focus for understanding why these youth are being discharged at such a high rate and then end up at the Command Post through law enforcement. Dr. Sanders provided some clarification to the newspaper's characterization of youth sleeping at the Command Post. He added that some initial conversations with Community Care Licensing (CCL) has taken place to respond to the group homes complaint that CCL regulations are too restrictive and preclude them from receiving youth with difficult/aggressive behaviors and severe mental health needs. He further stated that on any given day there are 60 -100 RCL 12 beds available, while at the same time there are youth in need of placement.

Chair Williams asked Dr. Sanders to comment on the Paramount Center which was originally intended to serve as a 23 hour reception center. He stated that the population of youth who

stay at the command post are not new to the system and they have been ejected from group homes. The reception center would not accommodate the needs of these older youth after the 23 hours has elapsed. The Paramount Center is being utilized as an out stationed command post.

Vice Chair Biondi asked if the Department has investigated how other jurisdictions deal with shelter care for youth and referenced New York's approach to this issue. He responded in the affirmative. Work is taking place to ensure that the Department has the appropriate resources for this population, but expressed concern that he does not want to continue setting up temporary placements for kids, rather he would like to develop strategies for kids to be able to return to placements after they have run and to decrease the rate at which they are ejected from group homes.

APPRECIATION DAY

- Chair Williams acknowledged Muriel Cassell for her 35 years of providing foster care services to 125 children.
- Chair Williams acknowledged and recognized the recently retired Department staff, each of whom worked for the betterment of children for over 30 years: Betsy Azariah, Gene Gilden, Romalis Taylor and Elaine McElhinney.

NEW BUSINESS

Children's Trust Fund: Deputy Director Joan Smith, DCFS, indicated that a review of all of the Department's trust fund accounts to determine their purpose, their activity and fund balance. Ms. Smith stated that there are five major areas for which the Department has trust funds: administration (2), grants, family and children services, scholarships and, general donations.

Cynthia James, DCFS, stated that the trust fund account review revealed that there are a total of 20 primary trust accounts assigned to the Department. The review then examined whether the purpose of the account and its disbursements are aligned, as well as account balances, and activity level. The trust fund review found that there were several trust funds with no balance or activities. These inactive accounts have been closed.

Mitch Mason, DCFS, reported that the Children and Families Trust Fund was established in 1968 with the purpose of providing families with resources that could not be funded through traditional means. The solvency of this fund has been the result of local office fund raisers and it is a United Way designated fund. The proceeds from the annual All for the Love of Children event, sponsored by the 5th Supervisorial district, is applied to this fund. He explained that CSWs can apply for these funds on behalf of families for such things as household appliances, clothing, beds, camps, and uncovered ancillary dental and orthodontia expenses. Mr. Mason stated that in overseeing the trust funds there are three goals the finance division is working towards: 1) ensuring fiscal controls are in place, 2) looking for more opportunities to increase fund raising, 3) increasing disbursements from the fund. This last goal is critical as the current balance of the fund is \$300,000.00. He further stated it is through a committee structure that fund requests are approved.

Oversight of the grant funds will also receive this same type of oversight as it too has a balance close to \$300,000.00.

Commissioner Kleinberg provided the presenters with some historical context for the administration of the trust fund and how funds and donations were solicited. Mr. Mason referenced the Y.O.U. Board, a 501c3 organization, which also has a trust fund that provides support to the Department's family in areas that the Department can not fulfill. Commissioner Kleinberg suggested that there be coordination between the Department and the Y.O.U. Board so as to maximize resources to families.

Vice Chair Biondi questioned the usefulness of the committee structure to approve fund requests with the concern that it may not address critical issues that need immediate funding. Mr. Mason stated that there is a process in place for those situations. He also commented that approximately \$50 to \$80 thousand is disbursed each month.

Vice Chair Ma asked whether these funds could be accessed to support the liability cost concerns of the group homes. While Dr. Sanders did not believe these funds were the appropriate avenue, he did think that exploring other funding streams was a viable activity. He commented that such an exploration took place for foster care.

Commissioner Kleinberg asked how the Department handled the scholarship funds awarded to emancipating youth who never claim the funds. Ms. Smith stated that in general the money remains in the fund and an accounting is submitted to the donor. Some donors have raised concerns about this very issue. The Department's emancipation division along with the emancipation partnership is working to ensure that the funds are disbursed and youth use the funds.

Commissioner Kleinberg questioned how it is determined what needs are funded and not funded. Ms. Smith indicated that improved oversight of the funds will include the development of an annual report that will show how the funds were spent, types of requests and approved requests. Once that information is produced the Department can then determine how to best utilize the funds. Chair Williams asked that the Commission be granted a seat on the fund's review committee.

Vice Chair Ma asked what the proceeds were from the All for the Love of Children event and whether the Y.O.U. Board assisted. Mr. Mason stated that the event is worked through Supervisor Antonovich's office and staffed by the Department. Last years event grossed approximately \$13 thousand with net proceeds at approximately \$7 thousand. The Y.O.U. Boards primary fund raising event is an annual golf tournament.

FY 2005-06 Children and Families Budget Addendum: Deena Margolis, CAO, stated that FY 2002-03 was the first year that the County issued a restructured children and families budget. The intent being that it is developed as an addendum so that it can be used as a decision making tool during budget deliberations. There is a five year phased implementation plan for the budget to give the departments time to develop budgeting tools and performance measures to break out programs at a more discreet level. This budget represents the fourth year in the implementation

plan. Therefore 75% of each department's programs had to have performance measures and individual program budgets included.

The FY 2005-06 budget represents \$5.2 billion identified by the department's for children and families and is an increase of approximately 3.6% from the previous years budget. The budget represents one-third of the county's overall proposed budget. This percentage has remained consistent over the years. The majority of the expenditures, 98%, for children and families programs come from the county's seven major departments: DCFS, Department of Public Social Services, Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, Probation Department, Child Support Services and Community and Senior Services.

Ms. Margolis gave an overview of the different sections in the budget document. She indicated that section three has changed somewhat from previous years. This section inventories all of the programs serving children and families organized by department. It includes budget information and performance measurement information. Each department was asked to develop a program performance analysis of all of their programs that have performance measures. This should show how the programs are performing based the established performance measures. They were also asked to identify three to five areas in which they intended to improve program performance. She commented that the DCFS has submitted information on 100% of their program budget.

The funding source and revenue stream section of the budget provides a compilation of revenue information disaggregated by department to understand which funding sources are being utilized. Ms. Margolis stated that this section is a work in progress but believes that the information is improving each year and will change and develop over time.

Vice Chair Biondi commented on conflicting data between Probation Department and DMH and questioned the value of the information. Ms. Margolis acknowledged some of the problems with the collection of data. Ms. Margolis will follow-up on her specific data reference.

Commissioner Kleinberg asked if there is any discussion about organizing the data so that the county can understand in what areas the departments are working together to serve a family. Ms. Margolis indicated that there has been ongoing discussion and some thoughts include organizing the data around the five outcome areas. Ms. Smith added that the emancipation/ILP budget would be the structure to look at to examine how funding from different sources comes together to provide services for one population.

Chair Williams suggested that a future budget addendum support a reporting of the outcomes/goals of the Department around Prevention, Family Reunification and Permanency.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no request for public comment; however, Commissioner McClanley announced that former Commissioner Janet Teague was honored the Humanitarian award at the 3rd Annual High Tea of Victoria Rowell's Foundation. Dr. Sanders commented on Commissioner McClanley's involvement in the event as the moderator of a youth panel.

MEETING ADJOURNED

